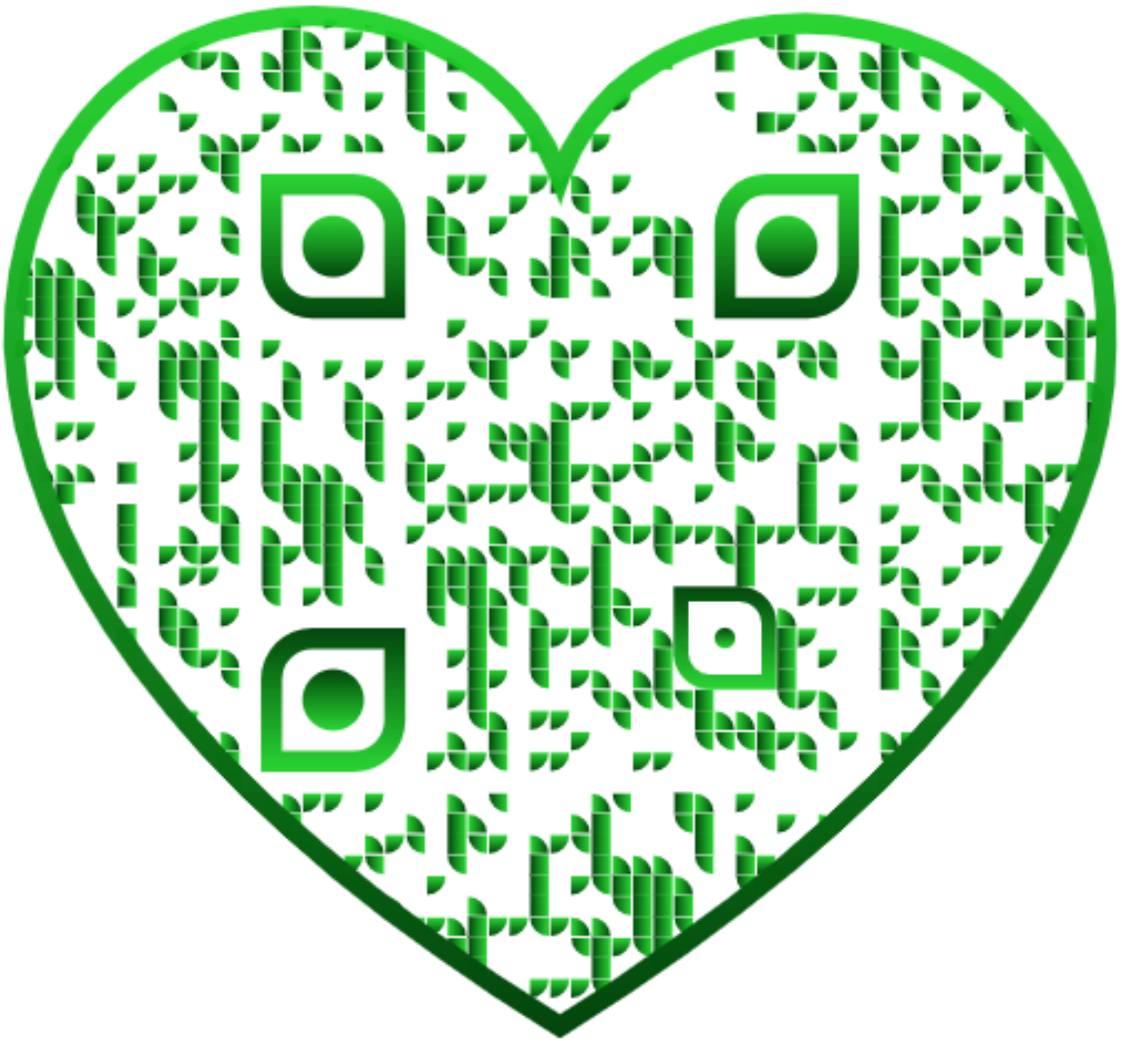
SCROLLING OUR LIVES AWAY

Digital Detox Journal



'TECHNOLOGY SHOULD IMPROVE YOUR LIFE.... NOT BECOME YOUR LIFE...'
BILLY COX

INTRODUCTION

It's no secret that the majority of us are glued to our mobile phones. Some might even say addicted! Social Media aside, we rely on these little electronic boxes for communication, our calendars, shopping, notes, directions, to read the news, to play games and so much more. For many people, being connected and immersed in the digital world is just a part of everyday life.

Smartphones and our other electronic devices are now so robust that it has become increasingly difficult for a person to do a 'digital detox' given how entrenched they are in so many aspects of our lives.

Yet the attraction of having created an entire world around our digital devices is not without some side effects. As a result of the technological overload, many adults report feeling tired, stressed and unable to sleep. Children and young people are reported to spend an average of 6.5 hours looking at screens. Is this too much of a good thing? (Storyberries Bloggers).

Our phones are usually used for connection with Family, Friends, Health and Work and the countless phone notifications received from any one of these connections can often cause stress and wreak havoc on our well-being so it is so important that we find 'offline' balance in this ever growing online world.

RESEARCH AND STATS

While people often feel that they can't imagine life without their tech devices, research and surveys have found that technology use can also contribute to stress.

Research shows that constantly being tied to our phones for work, does not correlate with being more productive. In his book 'How to stay connected after disconnecting', Blake Snow suggests we all try the 'rule of thirds:

8 hours for work/study

8 hours free

8 hours of sleep

Free time and rest are essential as they allow our minds to wander and then come back rejuvenated and recharged the next day. This is where phones get in the way. When our phones are always on, they hinder us from keeping our free time actually free because they never enable us to 'switch off' and disconnect. Therefore, we never allow our brains to have the full essential break it needs to be our most creative, productive self.

The Cybersmile Foundation researched 1000 young people and their findings showed that:

- Nearly half (46%) of young people consider themselves addicted to their smartphone. This is particularly evident amongst 16-year-olds, with 55% of those interviewed considering themselves addicted to theirs
- 60% of young people feel that the time they spend online negatively impacts other important areas of their life including sleep, diet, exercise and study
- 35% of young people feel that internet and social media use negatively affects their mental and/or physical health
- 42% of young people consider their parents to be addicted to their smartphones and 18% of young people would like their parents to help them more with reducing the amount of time they spend online
- Over a quarter (27%) of young people feel that their parents would not know how to help them with online related problems. With the same percentage of 16-year-olds not feeling comfortable going to their parents with said problem. A further 13% of 13-year-olds also feel that their parent's internet or social media use has affected their ability to look after them
- Almost a third (30%) of children feel their school wouldn't know how to help them with an online related problem

A **Digital Detox** is quite simply giving up your devices for a period of time. 'Detoxing' from digital devices is often seen as a way to focus on real-life social interactions without distractions. By temporarily forgoing digital devices, people can let go of the stress that can occur from constant connectivity.

WHY DO A DIGITAL DETOX?

The research and stats listed show us that to digitally detox on a regular basis would be good for our mental well-being. Of course, it's not going to be easy, but without the interference of your phone or gaming device, you might find yourself less stressed, sleeping better and enjoying time to yourself.

Constant Digital Connectivity can make you feel like you're missing out.

Fear of missing out, known as **FOMO**, is the fear that you are missing the experiences that everyone else is having. Constant connectivity can feed this fear. Every time you see an image or post about someone else's life, it can leave you feeling as if your life is less exciting than theirs. FOMO can also keep you constantly checking your device out of fear that you are going to miss an important text, DM or post.

In this age of digital addiction, a Digital Detox is a great way to test yourself. How reliant are you, really, on these screens? Will detoxing from them make you feel better? What, if anything, will you actually miss?

Doing a digital detox is one way to set limits and reduce your fear of missing out. The key is to do it in a way that doesn't leave you feeling cut off from what's happening in your digital world.

Some signs you might need a Digital Detox

- You feel stressed or anxious if you can't find your phone
- You feel stressed or anxious if you're in a place where you can't use your phone
- You find yourself checking your phone every few minutes
- You often find yourself checking/using your phone first thing in the morning or late at night
- You feel depressed, anxious or angry after spending time on social media
- You're afraid you will miss something if you don't constantly check your phone
- You are obsessed with the like, re-share or comments on your social media posts
- You check your phone even during a conversation or meal with someone
- You have trouble concentrating without having to check your phone

WHAT IS A DIGITAL DETOX JOURNAL?

Quite simply, a Digital Detox Journal is a tool to keep track of your online use, to educate yourself on the issues associated with excessive screen time and technology use and to challenge yourself to 'digitally detox' for one day each month – or more if you can.

This journal is a great place for you to think about all the good things (apart from your phone, tablet or gaming device) in your life. When was the last time you went out and genuinely took in your surroundings? When did you last watch a concert, a show or a fireworks display and not view it through the lens of your phone? When did you last enjoy a day out or a holiday without thinking of taking a photo in order to post it on your socials?

This journal can help you flip the reset button and appreciate things you may have started to take for granted. Things like:

- Spending time with family and friends
- A walk in the park
- Enjoying the scenery around you (instead of looking down at your phone)
- Your pets
- Baking yummy cakes
- Sunny days

There are so many things you might be thankful for. It doesn't matter how simple it is. If it made you feel happy, then it's important.

Keeping a journal has been proven to help increase happiness and lower stress so keeping a Digital Detox journal can do the same thing. On the day that you 'Digitally Detox', write down or draw how you are feeling, things you have done and try and explain what it was about the event that made you happy! There are enough pages in this journal for 4 'detoxes, after which, if you continue with them, you can photocopy the pages you need or download them from our website.

BENEFITS OF KEEPING A DIGITAL DETOX JOURNAL

Rather than focussing and complaining about not having your phone and the things you think you deserve, take a few moments to focus on all that you have. Developing an "attitude of gratitude" is one of the simplest ways to improve your satisfaction with life and to understand that although we can do so much with our phones, it's not the end of the world to be without it every now and then.

- Journaling can help lower your stress levels
- It can help you feel calmer – especially at night
- Journaling can give you a new perspective on what is important to you and what you truly appreciate in your life
- Taking time to keep a Digital Detox Journal can help you find out and focus on what really matters to you
- It will help you learn more about yourself and become more self-aware
- Your journal is for your eyes only, so you can write anything you feel without worrying about judgment from others
- On days when you feel blue or that everything is getting too much, you can read through your journal to re-adjust your attitude and remember all the good things in your life (Jessen, 2015)

DETOX TIME

Your Digital Detox is a personal endeavour that must be unique to you and your life. No one can tell you why you should detox or what you should be grateful for, but it might be an idea to choose a regular time to detox, such as, the last day of the week/month (depending on how often you have decided to Digitally Detox). We would suggest you 'start small' so as not to feel too stressed about it.

Once you have set your challenge, answer the question underneath (truthfully).

Date:

Challenge:

I will not check any social media pages for 24 hours ☐

I won't use TikTok for a day ☐

Other (please use this section to fill in your own Digital Challenge) ☐

_____ ☐

_____ ☐

_____ ☐

_____ ☐

_____ ☐

_____ ☐

Today's Digital Detox made me feel:

Okay ☐

Great ☐

Stressed ☐

Worried ☐

Irritable ☐

Anxious ☐

Other ☐

Q: Why is this challenge a challenge to me?

A: _____

_____

_____

Now be honest .....

I digitally detoxed for:

24 hours ☐

18 – 23 hours ☐

12 – 17 hours ☐

6 – 11 hours ☐

Less than 6 hours ☐

Instead, I will:

Spend time with my family ☐

Do some baking ☐

Catch up with some films I want to watch ☐

Start a new class (such as, exercise, football, dancing, drama etc) ☐

Other (please use this section to fill in your option) ☐

_____ ☐

_____ ☐

REFLECTION AND 3 – 2 – 1 CHALLENGE

Reflective practice has huge benefits in increasing self-awareness.
Some people are known to reframe 'challenges' as learning opportunities.

Now write:

Three things you have learned from your detox challenge:

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

Two actions to take from it:

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

One thing you won't forget:

1. _____

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While it's totally unrealistic to quit technology completely, even a day or two off technology every now and then, can be truly restorative.

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